

connection

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. December 2007 Vol. 31 No. 8



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Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a non-profit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex individuals, their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is an organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people.

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. Kinship has a board of up to 15 officers and 13 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes several thousand people in 43 countries.

SDA Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn, or even mention, homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts, which are often used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBT has its roots in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

Support Kinship

Kinship operates solely on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBT Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below. (You can also donate, using your Visa or Master Card, by contacting Karen Wetherell at treasurer@sdakinship.org. She will phone you so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, or visit SDA Kinship's Web Site at: www.sdakinship.org.

Just Married

WOW! When we first arrived in Vancouver, BC we were overwhelmed with the fact that there is no discrimination against two women who want to get married. People at the marriage license bureau, the bank and other locations kept asking us "What's wrong with the United States?" We enjoyed our time there. Our wedding was perfect. Kinship's John Edwards put us in touch with the Rainbow Community Church. We weren't quite sure what to expect because we had gotten a number of newsletters from the church that made it sound very evangelistic. The congregation turned out to be warm and inclusive of all. Pastor Dylan Crozier and his partner Vinnie immediately made us feel welcome.

We have been together for 32 years and believed it was high time we get married. A pastor friend of ours suggested that we had the longest engagement in history! We considered going to Massachusetts, Vermont or Canada. British Columbia is closest to where we live. Bev is 66 and Sue is 63. Bev's brother, sister-in-law and nephew came to our service. Our closest friends, an Adventist pastor and his wife, took their vacation and stood up with us as our witnesses. (Were this to get out to his congregation he would certainly be called to task and could possibly lose his job.) We had a wonderful, emotional wedding and great time in



Vancouver. We are still on cloud nine. Our honeymoon may never end.

To make our marriage commitment before God and two hundred people, to have our relationship blessed in this way has been powerful and meaningful to us. This is especially true for Bev who grew up in a conservative evangelical church. Members of the Rainbow Church told us that our ceremony was one of the most sincere and touching weddings they had attended. We feel privileged and at the same time saddened that this sacrament is not available to us here in our own state. Even though we've lived together for 32 years, we believe our marriage is of great importance to us. Our wedding has added something special to our relationship. This commitment deepens our love for each other every day.

We were so touched by the people we have met and by the Rainbow Community Church that

we are considering a return to Vancouver for our one- year anniversary. We were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church and then been made to feel very unwelcome when folk found out we are lesbians. Our choice has been not to return to church, at least not here in this very conservative little farm town. Although we are no longer Adventist, we have enjoyed our contact with Adventist folks through KinNet and look forward to receiving and reading the Connection together. Because we've made no secret of our recent nuptials, we are the talk of our town. We have had many supportive people, just not many from the "Christian" community. We meet in our home weekly with our friends who are a pastoral couple. We see other Christians who are not narrow-minded. I am glad we have some Christian support and friendship. Because we believe that all of us who are GLBTI have experienced discrimination, it is good for us to have our relationship validated and be accepted for who we are. We hope will bring some encouragement to others who may be thinking of getting married. It's never too late! And it is **so special**. Blessings to you all,

*—Bev Anderson and Sue Kringsberg
(Married September 16, 2007!)*



Cookies and Relationships

Michele O'Mara

Did you know that it's not a good idea to substitute baking powder for baking soda when making chocolate chip cookies? I learned the hard way; having to endure the most disappointed little cookie monsters imaginable. When faced with flat, dry, broken cookies that even our dog wouldn't eat, my son cried, "Mommy, these are Bisingusting." (That's not a typo - disgusting became bisingusting in our house when, as a toddler, Mitchell couldn't pronounce the "d" sound - so we all embraced the new, more powerful word, bisingusting).

Like cookies, primary love relationships also have essential ingredients. And while substitutes for these ingredients may create a close approximation of a good relationship, the outcome can be equally flat, dry, and eventually broken. What do you need? The answer to this question is 50% of the recipe for your particular relationship's success. We all partner to meet our needs.

Happiness in love depends on your ability to get core, emotional needs met. If unmet, most of us will ineffectively attempt to pacify ourselves with excessive sleeping, eating, working, drinking or we may turn to others to meet our needs. We are more likely to pursue ineffective means to meet

or soothe our needs than to accept they just won't be met. Our ineffective attempts to meet unmet needs can lead to some of our greatest relationship struggles. Seeking to feel loved by drinking or trying to feel safe by sleeping is akin to scratching my nose to ease the itch on my knee. It doesn't matter how many times I scratch my nose, if it is my knee that itches, then it is my knee that I must tend to.

We all want to feel emotionally safe, secure and loved. We want to feel connected, valued, understood and respected. How we arrive at these feelings is different for each of us. A chocolate chip cookie needs baking soda to rise; what do you need to rise in your life? According to Gary Chapman, there are five key love languages, (he is author of *The Five Languages of Love*). This book is a great introduction to the concept that we all go about getting our needs met differently. While I may feel deeply satisfied by a conversation about our relationship dreams and goals, Teresa is more likely to feel loved after a day spent working together in the yard. *What matters is that we both have opportunities to experience the things that are important to us; not that they are the same.*

Ask yourself these questions and start to uncover the essential ingredients for your relationship success: 1) What are your core emotional needs and how are these needs best met? Are you doing what YOU can to meet these needs yourself? Is your partner able, and willing, to support you in getting these needs met? 2) What are the core emotional needs of your partner, and how are these needs best met? Is your partner doing what he/she can to meet these needs herself? Are you willing, and able, to support her in getting these needs met? While partners do not have to have the same language to meet their respective needs, we do need to have the ability to get our needs met to feel satisfied in our relationships. No one wants to feel trapped in a relationship where it is not possible to get their needs met. (If you are unsure about the difference between a want and a need I have some further reading material on my web site.) I wish for you the perfect ingredients to rise in your life, and in your love.

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Safe Places in the Upper Room

Vermont Mini Kampmeeting

November 2-4

I don't think anyone arrived by train...or horse. Jan and her sister flew up from Florida. Keith flew in from Delaware. David picked Terry up from the airport. Ron drove. Gerry and Robert crossed the Canadian border. Two wonderful women from Maine came down for a relational reunion – but that's another story. We would love to hear, from at least two of you, what your re-acquaintance was like. Jeremy got out of work late but still made it for dinner, singing and the beginning of the puzzles. The fireplaces were lit in the great room and in our bed rooms. Our innkeeper Robert, says that his staff thinks our group is their favorite weekend of the year. We're not quite sure why but it has been our goal to make their life lighter in

our process. Lyda prepared her usual great food. Oak went out of his way to make pumpkin soup just because one person thought it might be nice. We think all the Sabbath presents were found this year but we did lose a bit of the count. Ken gave an extraordinary sermon about the love of God. Jerry's worship discussion left us thinking and talking. We were amazed at what we did see, and what we didn't, during Holly's Coyote Walk through the woods. Robert gave us a tour of the house and reminded us which presidents slept where, showed us the secret passage ways, regaled us with stories of the carriage entrances, touched our hearts with his care of this place and its history and made us laugh at April's Vietnamese pig.

You'll have to join us next year and ask them personally for the details of that adventure. Karen won the Boggle game, but there's always next year. David learned so much about West African Drumming during our Sunday morning class that he recognized some of the rhythms, much later, at the Boston Gay Men's Chorus. Jason left us laughing and playing. Dana's music filled our souls, as always. We enjoyed meeting his partner. All of a sudden our time is up, our weekend is over, and we're having lunch on our way out the door. Oops we can't forget to run up and down three floors to pick out our rooms for next year. We've left some space for you to join us. We'd like you to know, there is room at the Inn.



SDA Kinship International Board Meeting

November 17 and 18, 2007

We are in a very exciting time for our organization. Our membership continues to grow around the world. We are part of publishing a book on homosexuality and Christianity that will be available in early 2008. Our website and cyber communication resources are being upgraded so that we can be increasingly more accessible to each other and to those who are just learning about people who are GLBTI with a Seventh-day Adventist background. We have been sending out approximately 13,000 copies of the Connection each year. We are developing ways to have Kampmeeting locations with comfortable, well-appointed facilities that are easy to reach and affordable, planned three to five years in advance. We continue to work on ways to support Kinship leaders who work to reach out to specific regional areas. We want to use our donations and our resources in the most thoughtful and efficient way possible. These were the foci of our discussions and decisions.

Here are some of the results of the weekend.

- * The finance committee will be focusing on innovative ways of fundraising and of letting Kinship members know the need for their donations and the results of the funds we receive.
- * The Connection will continue to produce ten issues a year and will begin a process to become more ecological, economical, and accessible. Access to the Connection on line will be offered to all who receive the monthly Kinship E-News from the Board. It will also be available through our web site. Those who prefer to receive the Connection in their mail boxes will still be able to do so. Those of you

who are willing to receive the Connection on line are encouraged to let our distribution people know by contacting our office at office@sdakinship.org.

- * SDA Kinship International Kampmeeting 2008 is scheduled to be held at the Sheraton in Reston, Virginia. Our Kampmeeting Coordinator, Naveen Jonathan and our Church Liaison, Dave Ferguson are recruiting a wonderful group of speakers and workshop leaders.
- * Our Site Development Coordinator, Yolanda Elliott has already found some beautifully situated options in the Northwest United States for Kampmeeting 2009.
- * European Kinship Meeting 7 is scheduled for Bremen, Germany in September of 2008. European organizers will meet for support and planning in May of next year.
- * Australia continues to develop its programs and plans for Kampmeetings.
- * The public relations team, facilitated by Jacquie Hegarty are in the process of developing new programming, media releases and protocols for communication systems within and without our organization.
- * The Kinship Advisory Board will focus on the international distribution of the book *Homosexuality and Christianity: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*.

If you have any questions, curiosities or comments, you are more than welcome to contact any of the board members. Ways to reach us are on the second page of this publication.



We'd like to introduce you to...

Over and over again we hear that Kinship community members would like to get to know those of us who share the GLBTI Seventh-day Adventist world. This year our focus will be just that. In each issue of the Connection we're going to spend some time introducing you to each other. This month I asked people to tell us a little about their place of birth, schooling, professions, partners, interests and joys.

Dave Ferguson - I was born in Denver, Colorado and went to Denver Junior Academy which later became Mile High Academy. I was part of their second graduating class. I was a pastor in Colorado and California for fifteen years. These days I am an investment professional and Certified Financial Planner. Before I switched firms this year I was managing a team of thirty brokers. Now I'm building a new team. My partner is Peter Massey, a playwright. Between plays, he brings income to our household by writing grants for non-profit organizations. I am a member of the Glendale City Church where I am President of their Endowment Board; Chair of their Planning Committee; member of the Finance Committee, the choir and the Board of Deacons. I enjoy



hiking. I've traveled to more than twenty-five countries and forty-eight US states. I have a variety of musical interests including cabaret performances.

Joys in my life: my son, daughter-in-law and grandson. I have a wonderful partner who brings me joy in many ways every week.

Karen Wetherell was born in Takoma Park, Maryland. She is one of those Adventists who was raised in the shadow of the General Conference,



literally. Her uncle used to lean out of the windows of that office building to shout messages to Karen and her siblings as they played in their back yard. She spent her young life going through Spencerville Jr. Academy, Shenandoah Valley Academy and a bit at Columbia Union College. She works as an accountant. She has four daughters, two grandsons, 4.5 dogs, two cats, one wife and a Jeep Compass. She is in the process of getting her family relocated to warmer climates and recently moved to Newport News, Virginia after painting her daughter's condo and installing a toilet for the first time. She is very proud of that accomplishment. She is interested in snorkeling, photography, wood working, reading and bird watching.

Naveen Jonathan - I was born in Silver Spring, Maryland. I live in Loma Linda, California but my heart wants to relocate to the San Francisco Bay area. I attended Sligo School, Takoma Academy, Columbia Union College and Loma Linda

University. I am finishing my doctorate in

Marriage & Family Therapy.

My dissertation is entitled "A Qualitative

Deconstruction of Gender Roles Amongst Same-Sex Couples." I am a marriage and family therapist and school counselor working for the Catholic Charities of the Inland Empire. I teach as an adjunct professor at California State University, East Bay. I enjoy coordinating parties, weddings/commitment ceremonies and other events. My interests include research on gender, ethnicity, LGBTI issues, postmodern theories in therapy and social constructionist ways of thinking. I think it is very important for people in my field to learn the best ways of working with lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender and intersex families. I celebrate my Indian culture by being involved with a variety of South Asian societies. I am a world traveler, restaurant connoisseur, spa enthusiast, theater devotee and someone who likes to "shop until I drop." I play violin, swim, hang out at Orange



County beaches, entertain my cat Curtis and spend as much quality time as I can with my family and friends. I find joy in desert sunrises that shower the landscape and sky with color. I am always amazed and awed by the beauty God has created.

Fred Casey was born in Amarillo, Texas where his paternal grandparents had owned and ranched a half section of land for many years. When his family



moved to central California he went to Turlock, Fresno and Monterey Bay Academies. He says he is a

product of the Adventist school system, sadly. At Pacific Union College Fred studied Business Administration. From there he became a student missionary and played music for an evangelistic team. When he returned to PUC he began to study nursing. The second half of his course work brought him to Glendale Adventist Medical Center. He says that there "I found myself in the company of other gay men but, unfortunately, I ran the opposite direction." He submerged himself in church work and attempts to be straight, attending Homosexuals Anonymous at Fuller Seminary for five years. Fred goes on to say "Discouraged by the obvious results, I went to my pastor. He said all I needed to do was date women. He introduced me to a classmate of his from Pacific Union College. We dated for six

years. In my mind I was ready to ask her to marry me but had an epiphany moment at age thirty seven and realized I could not live a double life. I accepted myself, broke up with my girlfriend and went on the journey to become a whole person." Fred joined Kinship and attended the 1995 Kampmeeting. He met his partner Nelio in 1997 while he was playing piano for Christian Edition in Florida. "I was shopping at William Sonoma and ran into a handsome Brazilian." They had a bi-coastal relationship for five years before setting up household in Sarasota, Florida. Last year they relocated to Tillamook, Oregon. Fred reports loving the Pacific Northwest, despite the power outages. Nélio is a marine biologist who works as a feeding ecologist with cetaceans and pinapeds. Fred has been coordinating the Kinship office since 2001. He now works as a nursing case manager at Tillamook County General Hospital.

Taylor Ruhl - I was born at St. Helena Sanitarium & Hospital, a short distance from Pacific Union College. I attended St. Helena Public School, Bella Vista Mission School in



Mayaguez, Puerto Rico; Foothills School near St. Helena, California, Pacific Union College Preparatory School and Pacific Union College. There I received my bachelors and master's Degree in music. Later I earned a master's degree in library

science at the University of Southern California. I got my doctorate in higher education administration from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. I have maintained dual, parallel careers in church music and academic library administration. My hobbies are clothes shopping, travel and decorating our home. I enjoy watching TV in the evening with my partner, Leif. We have been together for ten years. My adult daughter, Liesl, is married to Michael Acquistapace, my wonderful son-in-law. I call them "my kids." We are very close, relationally and geographically. My greatest joy is our family and the time we spend together.

Leif Lind was born in Uganda and went to school in England, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, Lebanon, the United States and Canada. He works in church administration and as an



organist. He enjoys music, reading, reef aquariums, photography, travel, diving, nature study, language and cultural studies, and needlework. He also enjoys his daughter, son and life partner. When asked about what give him joy, he responded "I enjoy facing the challenges of a new day. Some days one looks forward to, others are harder to face. Life isn't always kind, but it is nearly always interesting."

David Thaxton - I was born in Springfield, Massachusetts midway through the last century. I attended



public schools in Springfield and finished college at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I studied one year abroad in

Grenoble, France where I became fluent in the language. I am a state employee; an unemployment law adjudicator. I am the person who determines whether you will or will not receive unemployment benefits if you quit or are fired from a job in Massachusetts. Sometimes I am placed where I have to make a decision that does not fit favorably with my claimants. At Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church I am assistant treasurer, school board chair person and a very active member of the Adventist Youth Council. I love working with our youth. I also love to sing, travel, read and play volleyball. I like to plan things. I live by myself but am considering inviting a cat to the household. I find joy in the morning when I get up and sing; open my voice to God. I have just become the co-coordinator of Region One and hopefully will begin to take more of an active part in our Kinship Family.



A look back on SDA Kinship 2007...

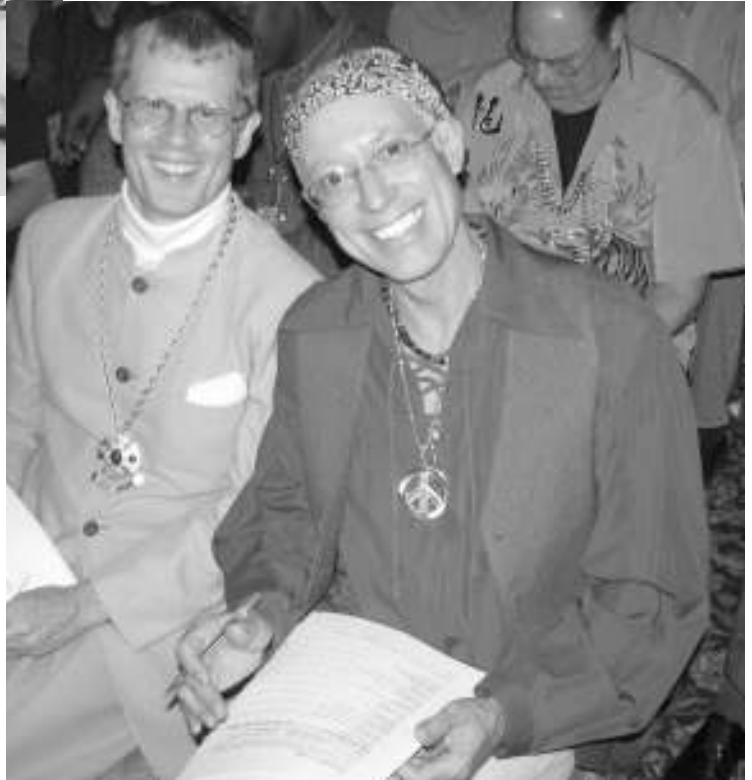
As this year ends, we'd like to share with you photos from SDA Kinship events and gatherings that have happened this year. We would also like to encourage you to share with us photos of Kinship events in your area for next year!

March Board Meeting...



U.S. Kampmeeting...





European Kampmeeting...





Vermont...



Appreciations from Our Treasurer

I want to thank everyone that has made donations this year to SDA Kinship International. Your commitment to this organization is what has made possible so many positive projects for 2007. The final editing is currently being done on the book: *Homosexuality and Christianity: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*. It will be going to print early next year. Please remember Kinship as you plan your final contributions for 2007. You can make online donations at <https://cod.secure-host.com/sdakinship/giftform.php> or you can call the treasurer at 413- 325-3647 with credit card information. Any check, mailed to our office at PO Box 69 in Tillamook, Oregon 97141-0069 and postmarked December 31, 2007 or earlier, will be included in your 2007 donation receipt. Many thanks to all of you for your generosity and for the other ways you care for our Kinship community.



November Board Meeting...



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The Connection reserves the right to edit manuscripts for length, syntax, grammar, and clarity.

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Finally we would like to wish you gentle blessings and to encourage you to take very good care of yourself—for you are infinitely valuable.